

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINS SHUM VE  
SUBJECT: SHOOTING DEATH OF STUDENT SPARKS WIDESPREAD  
DEMONSTRATIONS

REF: CARACAS 1639

1. A FEBRUARY 14 MARCH BY YOUNG STUDENTS IN SAN FELIPE, YARACUY STATE COMMEMORATING THE 1976 DEATHS OF TWO STUDENTS, DEGENERATED INTO A ROCK THROWING BRAWL WHICH ENDED WITH THE FATAL SHOOTING OF A 14-YEAR OLD STUDENT. ACCORDING TO SOME REPORTS, LOCAL AD PARTISANS ARMED WITH PISTOLS CONFRONTED THE BOISTEROUS BUT PEACEFUL MARCHERS AND IN THE ENSUING MELEE KILLED ONE STUDENT AND WOUNDED FIVE OTHERS. SEVERAL CARS WERE BURNED AND TWO AD OFFICES WERE RANSACKED BY THE STUDENTS. THE AUTHORITIES DETAINED MORE THAN A HUNDRED PEOPLE. AD SPOKESMAN SUPPORTED BY INTERIOR MINISTER LEPAGE, ASSERT THAT ARMED LEFTIST RADICALS INFILTRATED THE MARCH AND INCITED THE STUDENTS. THE GOV HAS ISSUED A STATEMENT EXONERATING THE POLICE AUTHORITIES WHILE OPPOSITION COPEI HAS CALLED FOR AN INVESTIGATION AND THE "DISARMING OF THE AD GANG IN YARACUY."

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2. THE STUDENT'S DEATH HAS TOUCHED OFF NUMEROUS DEMONSTRATIONS AND CONFRONTATIONS WITH POLICE BY YOUNG STUDENTS. THE DISORDERS HAVE CENTERED IN SAN FELIPE, BARQUISIMENTO, PUERTO CABELLO AND THE POORER BARRIOS OF CARACAS, BUT HAVE BEEN QUICKLY DISPERSED BY POLICE.

3. COMMENT: A VERY PRELIMINARY SURVEY BY THE EMBASSY OF

A NUMBER OF SOURCES CONCERNING THE DEMONSTRATIONS LEADS US TO THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS:

- (A) THEY ARE NOT SERIOUS,
- (B) THEY ARE ENDEMIC, ALTHOUGH THEY APPAR TO OCCUR INSSURTS,
- (C) THERE DOES APPEAR TO BE A SYSPATHETIC EFFECT, I.E.CYCLES OF DEMONSTRATIONS IN ONE CITY DO SEEM TO CAUSE DEMONSTRATIONS ELSEWHERE,
- (D) IT SEEMS TO BE FAIRLY EASY TO PERSUADE SUTDENTS AND PAETICULARLY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO DEMONSTATE.

OUR SOURCES DIFFER ACCORDING TO WHICH OF THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES THEY BELONG TO (AD OR COPEI). COPEI SOURCES SUGGEST THAT THE PRO LEMS IN YARACUY STATE WERE CAUSED BY AD USE OF GANGS OF ARMED TOUGHS FOR PUTTING DOWN DEMONSTATIONS (THIS BEING MUCH MORE PALATABLE POLITICALLY THAN USING THE POLICE). THE AD SOURCES TEND TO BELEIVE THAT EXTEREME LEFTISTS INCITED AND STAGED THE DEMONSTATIONS. FROM A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THIS TYPE OF DEMONSTATION HAS AFFLICTED ALL THE PRESIDENTS SINCE DEMONCRACY RETURNED TO VENEZUELA IN 1958, INCLUDING COPEI'S RAFAEL CALDERA. IN OUR VIEW, THERE ARE TWO FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUE TO THE ANOMIC VOLATILITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN VENEZUELA THE FIRST IS LIVING IN THE SHANTYTOWN AREAS OF THE MAJOR URBAN SECTORS. THE SECOND RELATES TO THEIR PRECEPTION OF THE POSSIBILITIES OFFERED BY THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EXPANDING CONSUMER SOCITY THAT IS VENEZUELAN TODAY. MANY OF THESE YOUNG PEOPLE PERCEIVE THAT THEY WILL NOT HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO GO TO THE UNIVERSITY (DESPITE THE GVOERNMENT'S MAASSIVE IMVESTMENT IN EDUCATION). THIS ID DISHEARTENING BECAUSE THEY KNOW THAT THE UNIVERSITY IS AN ALMOST FOOLPROOF KEY TO MATERIAL SUCCESS. FURTHER EVEN IF THEY WERE ABLE TO ASPIRE TO A UNIVERSITY EDUCATION, THERE IS NOT ENOUGH ROOM IN VENEZUELAN UNIVERSITYIES FOR ALL WHO SEEK TO ENTER. THIS PROBLEM, KNOWN LOCALLY AS CUPO (AVAILABLE SPACE), IS PROBABLY THE MOST COMMON CAUSE FOR STUEDENT DEMONSTATIONS AT THE HIGH SCHOOL ANDUNIVERSITY LEVEL.

4. EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW EVENTS AND REPORT SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS.  
VAKY

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** DEATHS, STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, CIVIL DISORDERS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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